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THE STATE DEFENCES OF RUSSIA.

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THE matter here presented to the readers of the JOURNAL of the Royal United Service Institution is in no way original. It is simply taken *en bloc* from official Russian sources, which are at the disposition of each and every individual who walks into Thiele's shop in St. Petersburg. It has the advantage of presenting Russian official views, and absolutely correct figures to the British reader. But such complete information as to the Russian Army as is published by the Intelligence Branch at the Horse Guards is not to be expected here.

The foundation of a permanent Army and Navy in Russia was laid by the Emperor Peter the Great. Prior to that time most of the military forces consisted of temporary levies of military *Opoltchenie*, some of which were composed of nobles and the sons of boyars, who were distributed according to localities, and compelled to appear for service, mounted, fully accoutred, and provisioned at their own expense. Another portion of the Militia was composed of so-called "given people," *Sdatochny*, taken from among the peasantry, and sent home at the end of a war. Permanent service in time of peace was performed by the *Streltsy*, town cossacks and bombardiers, principally in towns and fortresses. From the time of the Tsar Mikhail Feodorovitch (1616-45) it became the custom to hire foreigners; and these at first, and afterwards the nobility and "sons of boyars," were employed to form special regiments of cavalry and dragoons. During the reign of the Tsar Alexey Mikhailovitch regiments of infantry, composed of volunteers, were organised, but there was still no Regular permanent service. Those who served were engaged during most of the year in agriculture or industry, and were called together for only very short periods of drill. Peter the Great in forming a Regular Army, introduced general obligatory service from the very beginning, and entirely on his own idea, while the ranks of all the other European Armies were being filled by conscription, and the system of general obligatory service was adopted only a hundred years later. By *ukas* of Peter the Great, in 1699, the first operation of recruiting was carried out; and with the 32,000 recruits then collected were formed 27 infantry and 2 dragoon regiments, divided into three divisions. The recruiting was not personal, but communal, that is to say, each rural or urban commune had to furnish a certain number of recruits, and the selection of them was left to the communes themselves. Only the nobles, without exception, were compelled to serve for life until prevented

by complete exhaustion or old age. Thus, the system adopted by Russia at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was very different from the methods employed by the military authorities of the West European countries, in which volunteer recruits were enlisted, and sometimes pressed into the Service, or enticed into it by various forms of deception.

The obligation of military service in Russia extended to all classes of society. But in the course of time exemptions began to be made, as service for life was a grievously heavy burden; and these exemptions were gradually granted to all the higher classes of society, namely, the nobility, honorary citizens, merchants, and clergy. Exceptions were even made among the artisans and peasantry. The inhabitants of whole localities were sometimes relieved of the obligation of serving, which thus fell upon only four-fifths of the total population. The wars at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, however, compelled all the principal European States, except England, to replace voluntary recruiting by compulsory for military service. Armies began to be formed, not of volunteers, but of citizens called upon by the law to fulfil a sacred duty to their country. The obligation of military service was made personal, not admitting of exemption by payment or substitution, and it became compulsory for the whole male population of a certain age capable of bearing arms; but, at the same time, the service was limited for everyone in time of peace to the smallest term necessary for military instruction, and the formation of trustworthy cadres, wherewith to complete the Army in time of war. In Russia general compulsory service replaced the recruiting system in 1874, and the chief principles on which it was established are as follows:—All the male population capable of service, from the ages of 21 to 43, enter into the composition of the armed forces of the State. Some, however, belong to the Regular permanent troops, while others are counted as Militia, *Opoltschenie*, and are called out only in time of war, and then principally for service in the rear of the Regular Army. The general term of service in the Regular Army is 18 years, 4 of which are passed with the colours, and 14 in the Reserves, which correspond with the Prussian Landwehr. It must be noted, however, that the term of active service is considerably diminished in proportion to the degree of education, the shortest being only one year. Although military service is considered obligatory on everybody, nevertheless, in Russia, as in other States, a great many exemptions are made; as the full number of conscripts afforded by the whole population is not necessary to complete the cadres in time of peace. For instance, the cadres of the Russian Army on a peace footing represent about 900,000 men, called out for four years; consequently one-quarter of that number, or 225,000 conscripts, are required annually; but in view of completely filling up the ranks of the Army in case of war the yearly contingent is fixed at 265,000 men. At the same time the population furnishes yearly 880,000 men of 21 years of age, which is three times the required number. Therefore, the remaining two-thirds have to be relieved in some way or other from the duties of active service. The principal ground for exemption is physical incapacity, and for this

reason about 290,000 conscripts are made free of military service every year. In the next place, the privilege is granted for domestic reasons; as, for instance, in the case of an only son of a family, or an eldest son assisting his father when his brothers are unfit for work, etc. By right of their vocation the clergy of the Christian religion are entirely exempt. Medical men, dispensing chemists, teachers, etc., are at once included in the Reserves for 18 years. Finally a great many other persons are permitted to postpone their military service for physical and domestic reasons, and for the purpose of completing their education. The remainder of superfluous conscripts are exempted by drawing lots. Out of the yearly contingent of 265,000 men, about 6,000 are placed in the Navy, the remaining 259,000 being included in the Regular land forces. A special regulation regarding military service is applied to certain heterogeneous races at the Caucasus, who may pay a tax of money instead of furnishing conscripts. A special arrangement is also established for the Grand Duchy of Finland, according to which the term of service is only three years of active duty and two years in the Reserve, while these troops are compelled to serve exclusively in the local army.

As to the peculiarities of military service among the Cossacks, we shall have occasion to refer to them in subsequent remarks. The burden of military service is lighter for the population in Russia than in other States, both in the proportion of the annual number of recruits and in respect to the vast immunities that in Russia are granted on family grounds. Thus of the male population of 21 years of age—

					Enter the Service yearly, about	Are yearly exempt from serving	
						Through incapacity, about	On family grounds, about
						per cent.	per cent.
France	..	..	..	..	76	23	0
Germany	..	..	..	..	45	42	2
Austria	..	..	..	..	34	57	4
Russia	..	..	..	..	31	12	51

THE LAND FORCES.

All the land forces, according to the nature of service, are divided into Regular troops and Cossacks; and this Permanent Army is supplemented in case of war by the soldiers of the Militia Reserves, who are called out and organised into the formation units of the *Opolchenie*. Every unit of formation (regiment, battalion, battery, etc.) has two establishments, one for peace and one for war. In time of peace only the cadres of the Army are maintained, and from those the full strength of its organisation is developed in war-time. As no State is in a position to maintain its Army permanently on a war footing, all Armies in time of peace do not represent more than one-fourth, or even one-fifth, of the entire armed strength of the country. At the same time,

the greater the importance of certain parts of the Army in time of war, the nearer their cadres approach to the war establishment in time of peace. For this reason all units of formation are kept up in the field army or active troops, from the company and squadron to the army corps, and full staff of commanding officers and administration. It, therefore, only becomes necessary in time of war to add about one-half the rank and file and a small number of junior officers. In the Reserve and fortress troops a much smaller proportion of the war establishment is maintained, and the Reserve troops are only organised in time of war. The same differences in the cadres exist in other separate branches of the Army. The peace establishment of the Army is placed on a war footing by means of mobilisation. All the officers and privates of the Reserve are then called into the Service. The requisite complement of horses is furnished by the population under compulsory regulations, and paid for out of the Exchequer. Finally, the additional material required for the full expansion of the Army is supplied from the reserve stores, which are kept intact, and consist of material property representing the extra requirements of the war service as compared with the peace establishment. The greater the strength of the cadres in time of peace, the quicker and more easily can the units of formation be mobilised, in other words, the fewer men and horses have to be added. In Russia the cadres of the peace establishment amount, in round figures, to 860,000 to 900,000 men, which is more than in any other Continental State of Europe. In Germany, for instance, there are 599,000, in France, 572,000, in Austria, 335,000, and in Italy, 222,000. But when the cadres in Russia are compared with the great distance and extension of her frontiers, one is inclined to call them comparatively restricted. The field forces of various arms are united in the highest strategical unit—the army corps. As a rule each corps consists of two infantry divisions and one cavalry division, with the corresponding artillery. Rifle and sapper brigades are not included in the army corps. There are 22 army corps in all, 19 of which are composed of troops of the line; the remaining 3 being the corps of the Caucasus, the Grenadiers, and the Guards. The Finnish troops, consisting of 9 rifle battalions and 1 Dragoon regiment, receive their full complement of men on a special basis from among the local inhabitants, and are stationed in Finland. They are under the order of a separate commander of Finnish troops. The Guard Corps is specially remarkable for the complexity of its composition. The Russian Guard was first formed in the time of Peter the Great from the Preobrajensky and Semenoffsky regiments, and gradually grew to the present number of 12 infantry and 12 cavalry regiments, 4 rifle battalions, a company (*solnia*) of Ural Cossacks, 21 field and 6 horse artillery batteries, the detachment of Guard Marines, and a squadron of gendarmes of the Guard. All these troops enter into the composition of the Guard Corps, in addition to which the following are also included:—His Imperial Majesty's body guard of two squadrons of Cossacks from the Kuban, and two squadrons from the Terek, under the orders of the Commander of the Imperial Military Household; a company of Grena-

diers of the palace under control of the Minister of the Imperial Court; a Life Guard sapper battalion, and reserve detachments. Such is the composition of the Regular forces, to which, as we see, are attached certain regiments and batteries of Cossacks, who, by virtue of the character of their service, belong to the irregular troops.

As regards the latter, their origin must be referred to a very remote time. It is well known that a numerous military population gradually appeared on the south and south-eastern confines of Russia under the name of Cossacks. The word "Cossack" is Turkish, and means a "free man," a "free lance." The first Cossacks were settlers on the River Dnieper. When Russia after the Tartar invasion under Battui in the thirteenth century became divided into Muscovy and Russian Lithuania, a great many inhabitants of the present Little Russian provinces, having lost their country, retired to the islands of the Dnieper, guarded by rocks, impassable reeds and swamps. Here they welcomed everyone who was oppressed, and in general all refugees from all countries and peoples. Out of this free population in the region of the Dnieper gradually arose a martial, Christian society or knighthood, called by the name of "Cherkess" and subsequently "Cossacks." They soon became divided into two castes—married men and bachelors. The married Cossacks settled throughout Little Russia and the Ukraine, where they took to agriculture, and became a kind of Polish nobility. This helped the Polish Government in its efforts to bring the Cossacks under subjection. Accordingly at the end of the sixteenth century, under Stephen Bathory, a decree was issued which created a body of free Cossacks of 6,000 families from among the population of the Ukraine, with the right of electing their own colonels, but with dependence on the hetman of the Crown. Thus the Cossacks were transformed into a small force of Militia, and those who did not enter its ranks were reduced to serfdom. But this reform did not completely succeed. Besides the Cossacks recognised by the Government, there appeared other free and independent Cossacks, who retired to inaccessible islands beyond the rapids of the Dnieper, where they constructed a fortress called the *Syetch*.

In course of time the greater part of the Cossack troops lost their original importance, but the Government has always endeavoured to preserve their military organisation and martial spirit for the purpose of reinforcing the Regular Army with cavalry, and thus curtailing the regular contingent of this expensive branch of the Service. At the present time the Cossack population of the Empire occupy several extensive territories, and comprise eleven bodies of Cossack troops. These are, reckoning from West to East, the Don, Kooban, Terek, Astrakhan, Ural, Orenburg, Semiretchie, Siberian, Trans-Baikal, Amour, and Oosoorie Cossacks. The most numerous are those of the Don, Kooban, and Orenburg. The fundamental idea of the present regulations of military service, which is obligatory service for the entire male population, has been the chief rule of the Cossacks from the earliest times. They all possess definite and considerable allotments of land, and enjoy various privileges, in return for which one and all are bound to serve as soldiers. Each body of

Cossacks has its own service constituent and Militia Reserve. The service constituent is divided into three kinds, namely, the preparatory, active, and reserve troops. Cossacks from 18 to 21 years of age are reckoned in the preparatory contingent, and from 21 to 33 in the active troops. Active service, however, lasts only four years, during which the Cossacks thus serving are reckoned in the first category. They must provide their own uniforms, equipment, and horses. At 33 years of age the Cossacks pass into the Reserve, and after 38 into the Militia Reserve or *Opoltchenie*. The Commander-in-Chief of all the Cossack troops with the title of Ataman, is the Heir-Apparent Cesarevitch. Each separate Cossack body is under the immediate command of a deputy ataman, who also governs the local civil administration. Whenever there is a governor-general, the above title belongs to him, and special deputy atamans act under his orders.

In time of war the various Cossack populations furnish his Majesty's body-guard, 146 cavalry regiments, 39 separate squadrons, 20½ infantry or so-called platoon battalions, and 38 horse artillery batteries, representing the regulation total of 176,000 rank and file. In peace only one-third of these regiments, battalions, and batteries are in service, the rest being allowed the privilege of exemption. The irregular cavalry also include, besides Cossacks, other variously named bodies of troops formed among the native races of the Caucasus and Trans-Caspian region. Some of these perform principally local service, and have no permanent or uniform organisation. Of this character are the Daghestan cavalry regiment, the Militia regiments of the Kooban, Terek, Daghestan, Kars, and Batum, and the division of irregular Turkoman cavalry.

ORGANISATION OF MILITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Supreme command over all the military forces of the Empire is concentrated in the person of His Majesty the Emperor. The wishes of the supreme power in relation to the land forces are carried out by the Minister of War, to whom is subordinate the administration of military circuits in their respective localities, having the management both of the troops and all establishments necessary for the Army and defence of the State. In regard to the military circuits, of which there are 13, viz., St. Petersburg, Finland, Vilna, Warsaw, Kieff, Odessa, Moscow, Kazan, Caucasus, Toorkestan, Omsk, Irkutsk, and Pri-Morskaya; these, as already stated, are territorial units, in which command over all the troops is concentrated in the hands of one person commanding the troops of the circuit. Under him is a circuit staff, circuit departments of the commissariat, artillery, engineers, and medicine, besides a circuit court-martial. There is also a Military Council of the circuit, which is the highest institution for matters of military economy within the circuit, and is composed of all the chiefs of separate departments and one representative of the Minister of War, under the presidency of the commander of the troops or his assistant (*Adlatus*). The relation of the circuit administration to the circuit is the same as that of the Ministry of War to the whole

Empire; directing, as the latter does, the action of all local organs, and superintending all branches of military administration.

The Minister of War reports to the Emperor on all matters of military administration; signs Imperial orders, and announces the commands of the Tsar to the military authorities. The Ministry itself is composed of several parts. It contains two superior institutions called the Military Council and the Chief Military Court of Justice. The Military Council discusses all legislative matters, and the more important affairs relating to economical administration. In matters of legislation concerning only military jurisdiction, the resolutions of the Council are submitted directly to the Emperor. Other resolutions are placed before the Council of State. Economical questions are decided for the most part by the Military Council, on its own authority. The Council is directly subordinate to the supreme power; and assembles under the presidency of the Minister of War. Attached to the Council are two superior committees, one of military codification, for the investigation of legislative questions; and the other of military sanitation. Another superior institution of the Ministry is the Chief Military Court of Justice, which acts as a Court of Appeal, and also examines the projects of laws relating to courts-martial in general. The remaining central institutions of the Ministry of War are of a bureaucratic character. First comes the Grand Staff, in which are concentrated matters relating to the personal composition and completion of the ranks of the Army, its organisation, instruction, distribution, and economy. Then comes the Chancery or Office, for matters which are decided directly by the Minister, and for the work of the Military Council. For separate parts of military administration there are several superior departments, similar to those of the Military Circuits, namely:—1, Commissariat; 2, Artillery; 3, Engineer; 4, Military Medical Departments; 5, Military Educational Department, controlling all military educational establishments, besides the academies, officers' schools, special and *yunker* schools, which are subordinate to the Grand Staff; 6, Superior Department of Administration of Cossack troops; and 7, Superior Department of Military Justice, under the authority of the Military *procuror*, which is something like a Ministry of Military Justice, and which superintends all *procurors* and courts.

The Imperial Military Household, or staff, exists for the purpose of taking the Emperor's personal orders and carrying out special instructions. It has a commander, and is composed of all adjutants-general and generals of His Majesty's suite, aides-de-camp, and several other officers constituting the war staff of the Emperor. The Imperial Staff also includes an office and His Imperial Majesty's convoy, or body-guard. The duties of the commander include all arrangements for the journeys of the Emperor, for distribution of members of the Imperial Staff, and for their supply of provisions. When the Minister of War is not in attendance on the Emperor while travelling, the commander of the Imperial Staff receives the orders of His Majesty on military matters, and reports them to the Minister of War. The military administration has to do with such a great number of people and their multifarious

requirements, that a complete system has to be organised for the satisfaction of their peculiar wants and necessities. It is enough to mention that about a fourth of the Budget (288,000,000 roubles) is absorbed by military expenditure. First come the victualling arrangements; the constant fluctuations in the price of grain render these very difficult. Provisions prepared by the intendant, or commissariat authorities, are kept in special warehouses. A very large quantity has to be stored in reserve on the frontier districts in case of mobilisation, and there is a great difficulty in keeping it always fresh. As flour, in particular, soon spoils by keeping, a portion of the bread-stuff is stored in grain, and converted into flour and bread as required in military steam flour-mills and baking-ovens on the spot. The preparation of clothing, boots, etc., is not less difficult when it is considered that the expenditure for this purpose exceeds 20,000,000 roubles annually; but, besides this, there are paramount requirements of the troops in weapons, guns, ammunition, etc.

After the war with Turkey in 1877-78, all the materials and the armament of the troops was found to be either useless or very imperfect. The late Emperor Alexander III., who was convinced of this, devoted the whole of his reign to the re-organisation and re-armament of the fortresses, the re-armament of the troops, the improvement of their instruction in formation, drill, etc. It will suffice to note that the ordinary assignment for improvements in artillery amounts in Russia to 11,000,000 roubles. For the re-armament of the troops with the latest pattern of rifle, from 33 to 34 million roubles have been allotted during recent years. It is impossible to order rifles, shell, etc., from private factories, as such do not exist, or are very few in number. Therefore the military authorities must maintain factories and arsenals of their own. There are three such rifle factories, the most celebrated of which is at Tula; also the St. Petersburg artillery factory; three powder and pyroxaline factories, cartridge and rocket factories; and three arsenals at St. Petersburg, Briansk, and Kieff respectively. The engineer authorities have equally complicated work to perform, such as the construction of fortresses, barracks, and so-called strategical roads. The Ministry of War has also constructed entire lines of railway like the Trans-Caspian, which is still under the direction of the military authorities. Even the civil administration of certain regions is under the control of the Ministry of War, especially in territories close to the Central Asian frontiers, such as the Trans-Caspian, Toorkestan, and Trans-Baikal provinces, and also where the population consists principally of Cossacks, as on the Don, the Terek, and the Kooban. Consequently very extensive and various knowledge is required of those serving in the military administration, and this necessitates the existence of an entire system of military education.

The moral as well as the fighting qualities of the Army depend upon good officers and non-commissioned officers, but this is not enough. The recruits can hardly become good soldiers without at least some rudimentary instruction; and in this respect the military service becomes a powerful aid to national education, especially in States where this is

very little developed. In Russia about 75 per cent. of the conscripts are totally unable to read or write. In other words, out of 265,000 men drafted into the Army every year, 198,000 are in this state of utter ignorance. On entering the Army they are taught to read and write in their respective companies and squadrons. They are instructed in elementary information necessary to every private, which consists in a knowledge of certain prayers, of the meaning of a soldier's calling, the oath, the flag, the titles of the members of the Imperial Family, etc.; so that compulsory military service converts 200,000 of the population every year into men able to read and write. Some of the more capable soldiers are sent into the company schools, where they learn arithmetic, as well as reading and writing. For the purpose of preparing privates to become non-commissioned officers, each regiment has an "educational command," or detachment. Finally, in addition to the position of non-commissioned officer, there are other auxiliary duties devolving upon members of the rank and file, which also require a certain amount of preparation and instruction such as those of the regimental scribe, or *feldsher*, assistant surgeon, etc., for which there are a large number of special schools. In the Cossack provinces the Ministry for War has introduced military trade schools.

The establishments in which young men are prepared to be officers are divided into three categories. In some of them elementary education is given to the degree necessary only for service in separate branches of the Army. These are the *yunker* schools of the infantry, cavalry, and Cossacks. In other establishments, or so-called military schools, the instruction in military science is on a more extensive scale. Of these there are two for infantry, two for artillery, and one each for the cavalry and engineer troops and military topographers. Among this number of cadet corps there are two, namely, the Imperial Corps of Pages and the Finnish Corps, which possess the addition of special classes taking the place of the military schools. The Corps of Pages educates children of persons who have served the State, and they gradually leave that establishment to take service in the Guards. The third category of military educational establishments comprises the military academies for furnishing officers with the highest education necessary in special branches of the Service. The first of these is the Nicholas Academy of the Grand Staff, with its geodesical section; after which rank the Michael Artillery and the Nicholas Engineer Academies, and the Academy of Military Jurisprudence. Superior officers who have served several years are admitted into the academies on examination. The course of study lasts two or three years, with a supplementary course. For the preparation of officers for service on the Eastern confines of the Empire, there is an officers' course of study in Oriental languages of three years' duration in connection with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Besides the educational institutions above enumerated, three schools have lately been established for giving a perfect knowledge of the various arms of the Service and for preparing them to occupy independent posts. These are the Rifle and Cavalry Schools, and the Artillery School for practice in firing with fortress section. The Cavalry School also trains expert non-commissioned

officers as riders and smiths. The following are the regulation numbers in the above-mentioned institutions:—

In 23 corps of cadets	-	-	-	-	8,135 men
In 14 junker schools	-	-	-	-	3,590 „
In 7 military schools	-	-	-	-	2,045 „
In 4 officers' schools	-	-	-	-	270 „
In 4 academies, together with the class for					
Oriental languages	-	-	-	-	509 „
					14,549 men

In 1893, 2,372 young men left these institutions with the rank of officers, and as the diminution in the number of officers during that year was not more than 1,651, the military educational establishments are fully capable of satisfying the demand. The total expenditure of the Ministry of War on military education amounts to 9,000,000 roubles.

The enormous numbers of the Army give rise to two more military questions, namely, the preservation of the health of the troops, and the cure of invalids. The average number of sick in the Army during the last few years has been about 25,000 men daily. For their care and treatment there are about 25 permanent hospitals and 165 lazarettos, with altogether 28,000 beds. In places where no lazarettos exist, they are organised among the troops themselves. In the event of war, this accommodation for the sick is considerably increased by the addition of field and fortress hospitals, the ambulances of the Red Cross Society. The one deficiency which makes itself felt is the inadequate number of doctors, chemists, veterinary, and assistant surgeons, although the military authorities have their own Academy of Military Medicine for 750 students, and schools for assistant surgeons or *feldshers*. On the other hand, the general sanitary condition of the troops is much better than in former years. In the forties of the present century the rate of mortality in the Army was every year as much as 37 per 1,000. It has ever since continued to decline, and in 1892, in spite of cholera, there were not more than 9 deaths to the 1,000. But it still stands higher than in any other European State, as, for instance, in Germany, where in 1880 and the following years the death-rate was not much more than 3 per 1,000. There are many benevolent institutions of the military authorities; and the Alexander Committee for the wounded founded in 1814, under the presidency of the Grand Duke Michael Nikolaivitch, grants pensions for invalids, looks after the wounded, procures them occupations, medical assistance, etc. The asylums of the Alexander Committee are very numerous. At St. Petersburg is the Chesma Asylum for 746, and at Moscow the Ismail Asylum for 458. As regards size, these rank next to the celebrated Hôtel des Invalides at Paris for 5,000 inmates, and are larger than the homes for invalids in Berlin and Vienna.¹ But the concern of the Government for its invalid soldiers is not confined to placing them in hospitals and asylums. Many private soldiers receive help from the Exchequer at the rate of three roubles per month, and some are placed under the care of trustworthy persons, who are paid a certain remuneration.

¹ The details and figures as to medical matters are no longer reliable.